

Clay County Social Services Policy & Procedure Manual

Policy / Procedure:

Clay County Emergency Assistance Program

Reference (Rule / Statute):

Minnesota Statute 256J.626

Division / Unit:

Income Maintenance Unit

Date Effective:

04/07. Revised 3/09, 6/09, 8/09, 9/09, 01/11, 01/12, 10/13

Purpose:

Establish funding authorization and eligibility guidelines for the Clay County Emergency Assistance Program funded by Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) dollars.

Personnel Responsible:

Income Maintenance Unit Staff- Financial Workers and Supervisor

CLAY COUNTY EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM POLICY

Emergency Assistance (EA) is available to household units that live together in the same location with:

- A pregnant woman or
- A child who is less than 18 years of age or
- A person under the age of 19 who is a full time student in a secondary school who is living with an eligible caregiver,

AND

- The household's income is below 175% of the federal poverty guideline for the household size

AND

- The household unit must be in an emergency situation in which it is without, or will lose within 30 days after the date of application shelter and/or utilities, which would threaten their health or safety.

CRITERIA

- The Assistance unit consists of all individuals who reside in the household, regardless of their legal relationship.
- At least one member in the household must have resided in Minnesota for at least 30 days.
- At least one child or pregnant woman in the household unit meets citizenship requirements per MN Statute 256J.11
- Must be a resident of Clay County at the time of application.
- The household must be unable to resolve its emergency by combining liquid assets or other assets they can liquidate and income they anticipate to receive and other funds for which they are eligible. (Household must provide documentation of denial of the ability of liquidating of assets.)
- In the past 12 months, no member of the household unit has received any type of emergency assistance including crisis funding from other Counties and the State's Emergency General Assistance (EGA) program. Emergency assistance will only be available once in a twelve month period from the date of application. EA will remain open for 30 days from the date of application.
- Within the last 60 days from the date of application, no member of the household shall be or have been in a disqualification, sanction status or refusal to accept employment or training for employment, voluntarily quit a job or was discharged from a job due to employee conduct.
- Emergency Assistance will be denied if determined not cost effective - household income needs to be sufficient to continue to meet the need after EA issuance, it must not postpone, thus creating another emergency.
- The household unit must have paid 40% of its gross income after allowable work expenses towards housing cost, utility bills, and medical bills in the previous 60 days prior to date of application. Gross income of all assistance unit members should count – there is no excluded income. Count only payments made directly by the household. Payments made by Energy Assistance, including Crisis payments should not be counted as household payments.

- Emergency payment will not exceed three times the cash portion of the MFIP standard based on household size.
- If the emergency is for a loss of electricity or a heat source, the client must apply for energy assistance as a condition of eligibility for EA.
- If an ongoing cash recipient is approved for EA, their cash assistance payment will be issued in the form of vendor payments for shelter and utilities up to their cash assistance amount for a minimum of 6 months if the client meets the criteria outlined in Combined Manual reference 0024.09.
- Issuance of Emergency Assistance payments will be made in the form of vendor payments.
- Income below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guideline for the household size (including all people who reside together, regardless of legal relationship). Income must be verified.

Household Size	Monthly Standard
1	<u>\$1,676</u>
2	<u>\$2,263</u>
3	<u>\$2,850</u>
4	<u>\$3,437</u>
5	<u>\$4,024</u>
6	<u>\$4,611</u>
7	<u>\$5,198</u>
8	<u>\$5,785</u>
9	<u>\$6,372</u>
10	<u>\$6,959</u>
Additional People	<u>+587</u>

COVERED SERVICES

- Permanent housing - Past due rent, past due mortgage payments, contract for deed arrears, rental damaged deposits.
 - Deposits cannot exceed one month=s rent amount.
 - Landlord or mortgagor has legally served an eviction notice.
 - Late charges will be paid at the county's discretion.
 - Landlord or mortgagor must agree that emergency payment and/or payment made by an applicant terminates the eviction process.
- Utilities
 - Termination or threat of termination of service must be documented.
 - Utility provider confirms that they will continue or restore the utility with the amount of the EA issuance and payments made by the applicant.
 - Late charges and reconnect fees will be paid at county=s discretion.
 - Bill must be in a household member's name.
- Money management classes as referred and determined by Clay County Social Services.
 - Classes must be completed within two months of referral.
 - Failure to complete will cause ineligibility for future EA payments.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- To apply for Emergency Assistance, a household unit must complete a DHS Combined Application Form.
- Within 15 days after the county agency receives a completed application, or sooner if the immediacy and severity of the situation warrants, a household unit will be notified in writing whether their application was approved, denied or pended.
 - If notice is sent that an application was pended, the county agency will notify the household unit within the 30 days period from the date of application of approval or denial.
- Applications received from household units who reside in another county shall be forwarded to their county of residency. Clay County will not issue emergency funds for other county residents.

VERIFICATIONS

- Required verification for Emergency Assistance may include: Income, assets, living expenses, living situation (landlord statement), and children who are present in the home.
- The county agency will request required verification when necessary and relevant to administration of the program.
- Other documentation will be requested only as necessary to verify validity of need or payment to vendor.
- Failure to provide requested documentation will be valid grounds for denial of a request for Emergency Assistance.

EXCEPTIONS

- Exceptions to rules will be allowed only with the approval of the Director or the Director's designee.

APPEAL PROCESS

Under Minnesota Statutes, section 256.045 individuals may contest a denial of service by submitting a written request for a hearing to the state agency within 30 days after receiving written notice of the denial or within 90 days of the written notice if the individual shows good cause why the request was not submitted within the 30-day time limit.

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Date Approved:

Approved changes by County Board on October 18, 2011 to be
effective January 1, 2012.
Updated Federal Poverty Guideline Charts 2-25-13, 10-31-13
Board Reviewed 11-26-13